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[This is the web site of the reconstituted Socialist Party of Great Britain who were expelled from the Clapham-based Socialist Party in May 1991 for using the name "The Socialist Party of Great Britain" in our propaganda as required by Clause 6 of The Object and Declaration of Principles formulated in 1904 to which we agree. We reconstituted ourselves as The Socialist Party of Great Britain in June 1991. Any money given to us for literature or support is in recognition that we are not the Clapham based Socialist Party at 52 Clapham High Street and any mistakes will be rectified.]

Socialist Studies No.60, Summer 2006

In Bed With Capitalism

There is a cynical view of capitalist politics and the type of Labour politician who ends up a Minister of State which goes something like this: at 18 a dogmatic fanatic of a left wing political party; at 21 its leader; at 25 a radical researcher for a Labour Member of Parliament; at 30 a fire-brand MP; at 35 a junior Minister with a lucrative consultancy in a PR firm, at 40 a Minister of State passing legislation no different from the Tory Party, to eventually become a Cabinet Minister who would ascent to go to war, to turn a blind eye to torture and to agree to use troops to break strikes.

So it comes as no surprise that the MAIL ON SUNDAY should carry an article "*We've stopped looking for reds under the bed says MI5*" (26 February 2006). The Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, until recently responsible for MI6, was classified as a subversive when he was a student leader in the 1960s. Just what his "subversion" amounted to we are not told. Straw was no Marxist, he was certainly not a Socialist and, if his student politics was ever successful, it would have only replaced one form of capitalism with another.

Peter Mandelson, former Northern Ireland Secretary, friend of Tony, and now EU Trade Commissioner, was bugged for three years in the late 1970s because MI5 feared that, as a former member of the Young Communist League, he could have been a Soviet agent.

A waste of time and money for someone who is now "*at ease with the rich*" and enjoys their company at smart European restaurants where the working class are only to be found in the kitchens or serving at tables.

However, the Communist Party was, as is the Socialist Workers Party today, a springboard for political and media careers. Sir Alfred Sherman went from being a member of the Communist Party to become a confidant to Margaret Thatcher. Alexis Sayle, an "*alternative*" comedian, sprang from the YCL to become a court jester to the ruling class. At its prime, the Communist Party had more ex-members than members, and many of them went on to become establishment figures in politics, the media and the City. Leader writers in the SUN and the DAILY MAIL once started off writing for the SOCIALIST WORKER. Others use Left Wing parties as a temporary vehicle in order to get noticed by leaders of the Labour Party and then enter mainstream politics from stage left (e.g. Jonathan Porritt).

With the collapse of the Soviet empire, the politics played out by Straw and Mandelson when they were undergraduates is *passé*. David Miliband and Hilary Benn represent a new breed of career politicians for students entering the Labour Party, as mortar and gown are replaced by suits and "*on-message*" pagers.

To be a successful New Labour apparatchik requires huge bank accounts, business contacts, contracts with management consultancy companies, non-executive board placements, and a messianic belief in the global market: this is the smooth path to political patronage and advancement

According the MAIL ON SUNDAY, "*Current Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Hain is also believed to have been spied on because of his leading role in anti-apartheid protests in the Seventies.*" Yet, it would be interesting to read in the future of the links between the British and South African intelligence services during the 1970s, the way information was shared, and who spied on whom right up until Mandela took power. It would be interesting to know if the proposed Terrorism Bill which bans "*glorifying terrorism*" would have sent Mr Hain to jail for once supporting and celebrating the ANC, denounced by Thatcher at the time as a "*terrorist organisation*", and its leader Nelson Mandela, jailed by the apartheid regime as a "*terrorist*".

The MAIL ON SUNDAY seems to think that there is something odd for participants in "*radical*" student politics to pass on later to become establishment figures immersing themselves in the administration of British capitalism and serving the interests of the British capitalist class.

Socialists believe there is nothing odd or inconsistent in this behaviour. All three politicians, Straw, Mandelson and Hain, believed in capitalism when they were students, and it is immaterial whether their support was for state or private capitalism. They all believed in political leadership. They did not believe then and they still do not believe today that the working class is cut out for Socialism. One of the hall marks of left wing parties, and the Labour Party in particular, is their contempt towards the working class, their belief in their own superiority, and their adherence to a vile and corrupt politics found in universities and carried on out into the adult world. They accepted then, and still accept now, the buying and selling of commodities, the profit motive and the wages system. In short, they were never socialists to begin with.

That the security forces were interested in the political activities of Straw, Mandelson and Hain makes no difference to what they were and what they were to become. As for the secret services, the track record of their activities is pretty poor: infiltrated from top to bottom by Russian spies and double agents for much of the Cold War, staffed by imperialist fascists from Oxbridge (personified in Le Carre's novel TINKER, TAILOR SOLDIER SPY), for all their resources, they could not predict the collapse of the Soviet Union and of state capitalism throughout Eastern Europe in 1989.

That MI5 spied on three students who were to become pillars of the political establishment indicates what an incompetent shower the spooks actually are.

Whenever they are "*outed*" they come across as sad, repressed, self-obsessed anoraks, pretending they are James Bond figures, martini in one hand and a revolver in the other.

The reality is altogether different. The secret police's craven obsequiousness to the demands of Blair's Labour government to "*prove*" that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, a Labour government moreover which is stuffed full of politicians whom the secret services once spied on: that is an irony not entirely lost on Socialists.

In truth, there were never any "*reds under the bed*". The pseudo-reds who went on to become Labour Ministers were always in the capitalist bed. Who was shafting whom is best left for the type of journalism the MAIL ON SUNDAY is renowned for writing, and the Electoral Commission/police who are currently looking at the various donations by businessmen to the Labour Party in return for a seat in the House of Lords.

LABOUR'S FIRST "CORPORATE DAY"

[Labour's first Corporate Day] had all the hallmarks of a Conservative fundraising event. Chief Executives and directors of Britain's biggest companies lunching on Chablis and canapés, sponsored by Philip Morris the tobacco

company, which hired Baroness Thatcher as a consultant, But there wasn't a Tory in sight - at least none willing to admit it.

Financial Times, 5 October 1995

A WORD TO THE UNCONVERTED

The SPGB is a political party composed of working men and women who have organised together to capture political power for the purpose of introducing Socialism. The Party is controlled entirely by its members, who determine its policy by majority decisions. It has no "great men" or "leaders" but is simply a party of workers who know what they want and the way to get it. Holding that "the emancipation of the workers must be the work of the working class itself", it urges the workers to join its ranks and bear an equal share in the final great struggle -the struggle to banish privileged classes from the earth forever.

Questions of the Day, The SPGB, 1942 edition, pp 106-107

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The Empire Strikes Back

Schoolchildren are going to be indoctrinated with Imperialism when studying A-level history. The sinister sounding "*Government curriculum advisory body*" will force sixth formers to spend at least a quarter of their time studying the history of Empire, such as the rape of Africa, the Boer War with its concentration camps and the subjugation of India. The changes follow a call by Gordon Brown for a day to be set aside every year to celebrate "*Britishness*". He urged more open expressions of patriotism "*to restore public unity and traditional values*" (DAILY MAIL, 15 April 2006).

Like "*God*", "*Britishness*" is a meaningless and empty abstraction. The working class have no country to celebrate. You cannot have "*public unity*" in a class divided country where competition, unemployment, poor housing, and social alienation create the conditions for racism.

And if you look at the behaviour of the Labour Government with its pernicious mendacity, bribes, cronyism and moral bankruptcy it reflects the "*traditional values*" of all British governments; "*we and the class we represent will think and act one way but we want you to act another*". The traditional values of the ruling class: "*hypocrisy and self-interest*".

Imperialist History (what schoolchildren will not be taught).

1. In the late 17th century the British government licensed the pirates as "privateers", legalising their operations in return for a share of their proceeds.
2. Henry Morgan was the pirate who set the basis for the British Empire by raiding Gran Grenada. He was later knighted.
3. Sir Francis Wyatt, Governor of Virginia began the ethnic cleansing of Native Americans from the territory as early as the 17th century:
Our first work is expulsion of the Savages to gaine the free range of the countrey for encrease of Cattle, swine &c which will be more than restore us, for it is infinitely better to have no heathen among us (Niall Ferguson, EMPIRE, p10).
4. Three and a half million Africans came to the New World as slaves transported in British ships.
5. Rhodes' monopoly of African diamond production was secured by his friends in the City of London and in particular, the Rothschilds Bank. The death of African workers matched those in the coal mines of China today.
6. By 1914, the gross nominal value of Britain's stock of capital invested abroad was £3.8 billion, between two-fifths

and a half of all foreign-owned assets. The majority of workers in Britain lived and died in miserable squalor.

7. The DAILY MAIL claimed to be the "*Voice of Empire*". The DAILY MAIL's contribution to Imperialist racism was its attitude to "*economic migrants*". Lord Northcliffe, the owner of The DAILY MAIL, had this simplistic political view: "*The British people relish a good hero and a good hate*".

In 1900, The DAILY MAIL wrote indignantly of the Jews escaping pogroms in Russia as "*so-called refugees*" a consistent view they continue to this day when claiming Britain is being "*swamped*" by "*bogus asylum-seekers*".

In the 1930's, Lord Rothermere, owner of the DAILY MAIL, was a supporter of the fascist Sir Oswald Mosley and an admirer of Adolph Hitler (T. Kushmer, REFUGEES IN AN AGE OF GENOCIDE). Here is the MAIL's contribution to the Empire: "*the way stateless Jews from Germany are pouring into this country is an outrage*" (cited in the INDEPENDENT 20 April 2006).

8. Dr James Hunt laid the basis in the mid 19th century for the misuse of science by asserting that the "*Negro*" was a separate species while George Combe, author of A SYSTEM OF PHRENOLOGY (1825) set out to fraudulently portray racial differences in a highly derogatory way (EMPIRE, N. Ferguson pp.262-263).

9. Karl Pearson wrote:
National progress depends on racial fitness and the supreme test of this fitness was war. When war ceases mankind will no longer progress for their will be nothing to check the fertility of inferior stock (loc cit., p264).

10. Lord Roberts introduced a "*scorched Earth policy*" to the Boer War.

11. 27,927 Boer men, women and children died in the British concentration camps, and 14,000 blacks, 81 percent of them children, died in separate camps.

12. Who profited from the British Empire?
Most of the huge flows of money from Britain's vast stock of overseas investments flowed to a tiny elite of, at most, a few hundred thousand people (loc. cit., p285)

13. How much did Gladstone personally make from the British Empire?
In late 1875...he had invested £45,000 in the Ottoman Egyptian Tribute Loan of 1871 at a price of just 38(Nineteenth Century Bond prices were quoted in percentages of their nominal value). He had added a further £5000 by 1878, and a year later invested a further £15,000 in the 1845 Ottoman loan... By 1882 these bonds accounted for more than a third of his entire portfolio... the price of the 1871 bonds rose from 38 to 57 in the summer of 1882... by December 1882 the price of the 1871 bonds had risen to 82. In 1891 they touched 97 - a capital gain of more than 130 per cent (loc. cit., pp. 287-288).

14. What lessons can be learnt from the British Empire? The British Empire had nothing to do with the working class. The Empire enriched a few. Its impact was rape, pillage and plunder. The colour representing the British Empire on the world atlas should have been an ironic blood red.

FROM THE SOCIALIST STANDARD, 1954

The Class Struggle

The important part the class struggle plays in the Socialist movement is self-evident. Exploitation prompts and generates the effort to secure emancipation, and emancipation to the working class can be nothing but Socialism. Socialism is, therefore, the outcome of the class struggle.

Lessons of the Russian Revolution

Without reservation, the Socialist Party refuted the claim that the Bolsheviks could introduce Socialism in Russia. We were critical of their aims and methods. Socialism was impossible before large scale, industrial production had developed, and with it also, a dispossessed working class population had been formed and won over to Socialism. ..

If there are lessons to be learned from Russia and other parts of the world where capitalism is administered in the name of Socialism and by men who sprang from the workers it is that the only way to Socialism is through working class understanding and democracy.

Lessons of the 1926 General Strike

Throughout the strike the General Council [of the TUC] closed its eyes to the class conflict in which it was involved and insisted that the issue was purely an industrial one. Not so the Government. It realised clearly the class character of its own acts and called for support from the un-class conscious by addressing them as "the nation" and telling them that Parliament and the constitution were threatened. ...The two outstanding lessons of the General Strike were, firstly, that while political power is in the hands of the capitalist class, and until such time as the workers take it into their own hands, they must expect defeat in industrial struggles that threaten the interests of the whole capitalist class. Secondly, the evils of leadership. To blame the General Council or call them cowards and traitors solves nothing. To replace them by other leaders is merely to invite continuous repetitions of similar debacles. To be free of cowards, traitors, hypocrites, fakirs, and even well-intentioned mis-leaders, the workers must see to it that their representatives are their servants, not their masters, carrying out instructions, not giving them.

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Islamic Capitalism

Throughout recorded history religion has always been the hand-maiden and partner-in-crime of ruling classes. The Christian churches, catholic and protestant, apart from centuries spend slaughtering each other, have thrived and grown wealthy on the backs of slaves, feudal peasants and industrial wage-slaves, in companionship with the exploiting classes whose mouthpieces and 'morality' enforcers they have always been and, to this day, remain.

The Islamic religion, which serves capitalism by keeping its one and a half billion adherents on their knees, is quite open and blatant about its capitalist sponsorship and involvement, even to the extent of giving capitalism the direct approval of Allah, Mohammed and the Koran.

It is a significant fact that in present-day Russia there are 26 million Muslims and in Central Asia (Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan) there are a further 48.5 million. These are former Soviet Republics. So much for 74 years of Lenin's and Stalin's 'godless' Leftism - in reality state capitalism, falsely presented as socialism. These Central Asian republics are among the most tyrannical despotisms in the world, and feature prominently in the gas and oil pipeline rivalries of modern capitalism.

The people who publish tracts and booklets on the Internet and elsewhere, interpreting the taxation and banking laws of the Koran, so that the word of Allah is understood by the faithful, are called Islamic scholars - a classic case of the blind leading the blind. The Institute of Islamic Information and Education, under the heading BANKING ON ALLAH, has this to say:

What does a typical Islamic portfolio look like? ... demand for Islamic mutual funds is booming. There are now more than 100 funds worldwide, including three in the US (p4).

One 'scholar' is referred to as saying: "*Obey God's rules in other worlds, and your portfolio will prosper.*" Another, Jamil Jaroudi, had of Shamil Bank's investment banking, says: "*The Islamic economy covered half the world. How do you think Islam reached Indonesia and Malaysia? It was through traders, not jihad.*" The text adds: "*Indeed, Mohammed himself was a trader who early in his life led a caravan from Mecca to Syria*" (p4).

They may argue about taking interest, and forms of money-making that are not acceptable to Islam, but: *Everybody can agree on one matter though: it's okay to buy and sell stocks, since stocks represent real assets. And now they can be traded safely using the Dow Jones Islamic Index (p3).*

Another tract, THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF ISLAM, tells us (p5): *Islamic economic principles control both the production and consumption of wealth. Recognising one's right of*

building private fortunes, it stresses that wealth in reality belongs to Allah, which has been put in the custody of the individual, hence it should be spent in the ways of Allah, which means in healthy pursuits. The Holy Quran states, "The wealth is of Allah, which He hath bestowed upon you" (Z4. 33).

So the Koran and Allah, the god of Islam, recognise the right of the capitalist class to amass private fortunes and accumulate wealth. But so-called Islamic economics remains very quiet about the source of those private fortunes. The source of wealth under capitalism is the exploitation of the class of wage-workers, who produce everything as employees but subsist themselves on what it costs, on average, to keep them fit and able to continue working.

This tract also gives us details about the Zakat:
The Zakat is a tax exclusively for poor and needy persons... This tax has through the centuries contributed immensely to ameliorating the condition of the poor and has raised their standard of living by bringing them nearer the rich economically and socially.

This contradictory statement exposes the capitalist nature of that economics. For centuries the poor have remained poor, and had their poverty "*ameliorated*" by the taxes of the rich - who have remained rich. For centuries the poor have lived and died poor, and the rich have lived and died rich.

The same situation is common to capitalism everywhere. The poor are poor despite charity, not only in Muslim countries but throughout the world, because they are divorced from the means of production. They are a non-owning class - the poor among the class of wage-slaves, the unemployed, the old and the infirm.

They cannot escape the fact that 'private fortunes', 'prosperous portfolios' and 'stocks and shares' all owe their increments to the exploitation of wage-labour. Yet they lamely assert that "*Islam has steered midway between Capitalism and Communism*" (p3). They make the further absurd claim that "... *eliminating too much disparity between the rich and the poor ...*" is a Socialist principle. They accept that '*communism*' means what it has been falsely represented to mean by capitalist and Soviet, state-capitalist, propagandists.

If they had ever taken the trouble to read Marx and Engels, they would know that Socialism and Communism are two words for the same thing: namely, a world of commonly owned means of production, with no rich or poor, the wage-system and market economy having been abolished, and production being carried on solely and freely to meet human needs.

The first law of capitalism is that capital, i.e. that part of wealth devoted to factories, machinery, transport systems, raw materials, and wage-labour, must constantly reproduce itself (be renewed) or perish.

Means of production will, of course, have to be renewed under Socialism. It is the capital-to-wage-labour relations of production that determine the class basis of capitalism: the class that owns society's means of production is able to exploit the non-owning class and constantly expand their capital at the expense of wage-labour. In his work, THE POVERTY OF PHILOSOPHY (chapter I, section II), Marx says:

Thus in the history of society we see that the mode of exchanging products is regulated by the mode of producing them. Individual exchange corresponds also to a definite mode of production which itself corresponds to class antagonism. There is thus no individual exchange without the antagonism of classes.

Even the much trumpeted Islamic policy of not taking money in the form of interest is not an ideal prompted by human considerations but a concern for business failures caused by high interest rates. They even attribute depressions and crises to high interest rates (see THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF ISLAM, p6), and state quite blatantly:

The forbiddance of interest which checks accumulation of wealth and this strikes at the root of capitalism (p5).

Under the heading *Muslim world*, Wikipedia the free encyclopaedia tell us:

The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries includes many nations that are also in the Arab League. Although most oil sources on Earth are not in nations with Muslim majorities, the fully developed exporting regions are... As oil sources in Indonesia, Central Asia and southern regions of Russia become more developed, oil politics may be less dependent on the Arab world but more dependent on the Muslim World as a whole. Activities of Islamists seem destined to play a larger role, as they seek unified policies and support for unified fronts against non-

Muslim peoples who control Muslim oil resources.

This is naked oil-capitalism with an Islamic fig-leaf. The profitable production of oil and gasses, and the amassing of vast revenues is backed by ruthless competition and ultimately by armed force.

Allah and the Koran may glorify profitable portfolios but it is capitalism that balances working-class blood against oil. It should not be forgotten that, in Iraq where Sunni and Shia Muslims are constantly bombing and shooting each other, the background behind such bloody power-struggles is to gain control of vast oil resources. For every cleric who talks of Islam as peaceful, there is another who supports the killing.

Saudi Arabia

Capitalism can quite rightly be called the system where "*wealth accumulates and men decay*". In Saudi Arabia it is the fabulously wealthy who decay as much as the desperately poor. In their book SAUDI BABYLON, Hollingsworth and Mitchell present mind-blowing details of incredible wealth accruing to a tiny class of princely parasites. They detail some of the activities of Prince Bandar Bin Sultan, Saudi ambassador to the United States.

Prince Bandar is quoted telling the PBS Frontline programme:

If you tell me that, in building this whole country and in spending \$350 billion out of \$400 billion, that we misused or got corrupted with \$50 billion, I'll tell you, "yes, so what?"

Against the background of FBI and US Treasury investigations of other suspicious transactions, a further \$17.4 million becomes the focus of attention.

The funds were to build a new palace for the ambassador. As he already owned seven properties around the world, notably a \$30 million village estate in Glympton, Oxfordshire, and a \$36 million, 32-room mansion in Aspen, Colorado, it was difficult to know why he needed another home (pp 116-117).

The wealth of King Fahd dwarfs even these excesses. Until his near-fatal stroke in 1995, he reigned for 23 years and acquired a private fortune of \$20 billion, according to Forbes magazine (cited by Hollingsworth and Mitchell, p118). *He owns a 100-room palace in Marbella, Spain, modelled on the White House but four times its size. It is used by his 3,000 strong family and entourage. He has a 230-foot yacht, which cost \$50 million, and across the Pyrenees he owns a vast chateau on the French Riviera with fabulous Mediterranean views. His Swiss retreat near Geneva contains garage space for 300 Mercedes and 100 Rolls Royces for his entourage. In Saudi Arabia there are seven more palaces, including one in Riyadh which took four years to build and cost \$2.5 billion (see SAUDI BABYLON, pp 118-119).*

This is not the full list of his worldwide property portfolio. Muslims are expected to believe that Allah ordains such wealth and power. Currently oil revenues are around \$50 billion a year. A former Saudi diplomat is quoted saying: *If a poor guy steals a chicken to feed his starving family, then they cut off his hand. But if a prince steals billions, it's OK (ibid. p118).*

The Saudi regime not only cuts off hands: there were 81 decapitations in 2005 (TELETEXT, 20 December 2005).

In November 2005, Saudi Arabia was accepted as member 149 of the World Trade Organisation, after waiting for 14 years.

The world's biggest oil exporter, the country that cuts off the hands of thieves and beheads people, was told they will have to adopt WTO "*liberalisation legislation and an open economy*" (CEEFAQ, 11 November 2005). The hypocrisy is obvious, as with China: trade and oil first, and bourgeois liberalisation later.

The SUNDAY TIMES RICH LIST (2005) gives the world's 50 richest people. Number 8 is Prince Alwaleed, Saudi Arabia, with £12.3 billion. Number 11 is King Fahd (family), with £11.4 billion. Number 14 is the Sultan of Brunei with £10.4 billion. Number 42 is Nassar al Kharafi, Kuwait, with £4.7 billion.

Iran

Currently Iran is being heavily leaned on by the US, the UK, Russia, China and Israel, over the issue of the enrichment of uranium fuel with its potential for the production of nuclear weapons. All the above-mentioned countries have nuclear arsenals of their own. Their hypocrisy could hardly be more nauseating. In 2006, capitalism as always confronts us with a powder-keg world.

Media writers about religion either do not know or won't say that behind Judaism lurks the power of the Israeli ruling, capitalist class. So it is with Islam, Hinduism and Christianity. They each play the religious game of manipulation on behalf of their respective ruling classes in a world of rivalries and confrontations, sometimes with the same religion on opposing sides, Christianity in two world wars and Islam in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. The masses need a 'rationale' for them to line up behind the economic aspirations of the rulers who live on their backs.

It is their common dependence on working class political ignorance and the willingness to shout slogans at the effects of capitalism that enables the Leftists of today to march with the Muslim Association of Britain and the Stop the War Alliance.

Just as nearly three-quarters of a century of Soviet Bolshevism failed to end poverty and religious ignorance, Islam also fails. In the words of Ayatollah Jalaluddin Taheri in a letter to the President of Iran in July 2002:

... the despair, unemployment, inflation and high prices, the hellish gap between poverty and wealth, the deep and daily growing distance between the classes, the stagnation and decline of national revenue, a sick economy, bureaucratic corruption, desperately weak administration [and] the growing flaws in the country's political structure...

[quoted by Roger Howard, in his book *Iran in Crisis?* p147]

Although as Socialists, we regard all religion and its inhuman effects as ludicrous, ours is not a doctrine of hatred but of perseverance and persuasion. It is vital that Socialists continue to expose all class enemies in the struggle for Socialism. For this struggle to succeed, the world's workers must abandon the primitive superstitions of their masters.

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The Left and Islamic Capitalism

THE CAPITALIST LEFT Part 2 - continued from The SPGB 59

Stalin and his uncritical fans

The capitalist left's support for dictatorships and terrorists as well as for capitalist nations opposed to the Western Capitalism has a historical precedence.

Many of the Left during the last century saw Stalin's dictatorship as a model for the world to emulate. The Russian spy; Kim Philby-replaced allegiance to one nation state for another; and became an agent of the Soviet Union "*What Stalin does is Left*" he is reported to have said (P. Seale and M. McConville, *PHILBY: THE LONG ROAD TO MOSCOW* Penguin 1978, p.74). And elsewhere he said: "*But, as I look over Moscow from my study window, I see the solid foundations of the future I glimpsed at Cambridge*" (K Philby, *MY SILENT WAR*, 1969 p. 17).

For a whole generation of intellectuals in the West, the Soviet Union represented an alternative to the capitalism found in Europe and the US. It was nothing of the sort. State capitalism in Russia was a totalitarian dictatorship exploiting the working class. David Caute's *THE FELLOW TRAVELLERS*, (London, 1977) sets out the sad story of support for the Soviet Union from the 1920s to the 1940s.

Compared with the sound Marxist analysis of capitalist Russia by The SPGB, the working class were misled by titles such as; COMRADES AND CITIZENS (1938) by S. R. Allen; RED VIRTUE (1933) by E. Winter; DAWN IN RUSSIA (1932) by W. Frank; THE RUSSIA I BELIEVE IN (1945) by S. Harper, and SOCIALIST JUSTICE and the Trial of Radek and others (1937) by D. Collard.

Two volumes can be taken as typical examples: Pat Sloan's SOVIET DEMOCRACY and Hewlett Johnson's THE SOCIALIST SIXTH OF THE WORLD: the first by a party member, the second by a fellow traveller.

The chapter headings of Sloan's 1937 makes for depressing reading; "*Equality of Opportunity*", "*The Rights of the wage earner*", *The power of the trade unions*, *A People's press*, *A Worker's State*, *A Socialist Constitution*. We are told that:

Forced Labour, terrifying as it may sound, is...in fact...the imposition of a fine, on the instalment system compared with the significance of that term in Britain, Soviet imprisonment stands out as a most enjoyable experience (p.111).

On the question of freedom of the press Sloan asserted:

... the working citizen of the USSR enjoys an effective freedom of expression, in two ways, which is not enjoyed by him(sic) in other countries. First, the material in the newspapers is what he writes, and not what a privileged few write for his consumption. Secondly, what he writes is effective in the sense that it leads to concrete action being taken against abuses, bad practices, and injustice... The Soviet Press can truly claim to be democratic (p.106).

This, it should be noted was written in a period when the Stalinist terror had assumed new barbaric proportions. Not only did Stalin crush the old Party membership Stalin, exterminate the peasants but he also intensified and extended the exploitation of the workers; exploitation set out by Lenin. This was the classic period of the knock on the door in the middle of the night, followed by torture, a summary trial, imprisonment, and removal from the living. Cultural life was dead and there was no democratic press.

Hewlett Johnson's book was published in 1939. He greatly admired the five-year plans, an enthusiasm he attributed to "*Soviet Citizens in general*".

The successive five-year plans are awaited with eagerness unbelievable here. No financier ever hung on the declaration of the budget with half the zest that the common man in the Soviet Union awaits the publication of the five year plan. It constitutes the standard, the goal, the charter, the incentive, and the stimulus for millions of soviet citizens(p. 349).

The Soviet Union, we were told, had virtually established the first stage of socialism/communism yet the wages system and class exploitation persisted.

As millions were being murdered we were asked to believe that Stalin was no murderer:

Stalin is no oriental despot. His new constitution shows it. His readiness to relinquish power shows it. His refusal to add to the power he already possesses shows it. His willingness to lead his people down new and unfamiliar paths of democracy shows it. The easier course would be to add to his own power and develop autocratic rule. His genius revealed in the short, simple sentences which enshrine the basic law in the USSR... Here is a document which ranks amongst the greatest in all human documents in its love of humanity and its reverence for human dignitary (ibid., pp. 355-6).

The Left in all of this misleading confusion played out the role of useful idiots.

The term "*useful idiots*" is sometimes claimed to have been coined by Lenin to describe those western reporters and travellers who would endorse the Soviet Union and its policies in the West, like the Webbs.. However, no reference to a supporter of Russian capitalism being called a "*useful idiot*" was made in the United States until 1948, and not until decades later would the attempt to attribute the phrase to Lenin be made.

Lenin never wrote it in any published document, no one has claimed to have heard him say it first hand, and it contradicts the opinions expressed in Lenin's published documents in reference to the Comintern.

But the expression usefully describes the politics of the Left; useful idiots supporting the enemies of US capitalism

but everywhere ignoring or repudiating the class interests of the working class to replace world capitalism with world socialism.

The SPGB does not favour one capitalist country against another. All capitalist countries exploit all workers or to put it another way a world capitalist class divided into competing and hostile nation states exploits the world's working class. Our argument is that all workers, no matter where they live, all have a common interest in abolishing capitalism and establishing socialism.

The poison of left wing politics lies in its opportunism learnt from Lenin. They will do anything; say anything in the furtherance of their politics. Marx will be distorted, political parties like The SPGB will be written out of history. Anything goes. Their guiding light is "*By any means*". They reject political principle; they reject the hard task of convincing workers of becoming socialists; they say that making an omelette means breaking an egg. But the eggs they use are rotten and the omelette inedible.

The end justifies the means is a scurrilous political pursuit. The democratic means must justify the democratic ends. The politics of The SPGB in what it says and does foreshadows the society we wish to see established.

THE RUSSIAN DICTATORSHIP

A Socialist movement will grow in Russia, but it will come from the workers, not from the Russian dictators. The revolutionary fervour, as in past revolutions, has a tendency to work itself out as time goes on. The revolutionisers of the beginning are followed by waves of more and more reactionary followers... The Bolsheviks' attempt to usher in Socialism by "*legal enactment*" and by "*bold leaps*" before the economic conditions were ripe, and before the mass of the population desired Socialism, has been a total failure. In course of time that failure will become obvious to the workers inside and outside Russia. Questions of the Day, Socialist Party of Great Britain, 1942 edition (p66)

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Government Expenditure, Taxes and the Class Struggle

In the heyday of British capitalism when it was said that Britain was "*the workshop of the world*", profits were high, and in the period 1860-1875 they increased enormously. This was the period of "*laissez-faire*" when governments had little or no involvement in business. Because the cost of government was very low, the capitalists retained almost all of their income and were able to accumulate vast fortunes.

In 1880, for example, budget expenditure represented only 8% of National Income (GNP). In 1980 it was 46%, by 1989 it had dropped to 39%, and in 2004 it had increased to 42.6% (www.startinbusiness.co.uk/budget/2004).

Taxation in 1880 was consequently low. There was no Income Tax (PAYE) on workers' wages, and the amount of tax paid by a very rich person (i.e. someone with an annual unearned income corresponding to £500,000 in 2006) was only about 2%. Now it is 40% (the standard rate is 20%).

In 1880 there was no Corporation Tax on company profits. In 2006 the standard rate is 30% on amounts of profit over £1.5 million, with a lower rate of 19% for small companies.

In 1880 there was a somewhat complicated "*death duty*" but it was nothing like as high as the 40% Inheritance Tax now payable on the amount of an estate above £285,000.

Causes of Increased Government Expenditure

The cost of government has increased because governments have taken on additional functions, in particular what are known as "*social services*". Collectively, in 1900 the social services cost about 2.5% of total national income. Their cost increased to 4% in 1910, 6.4% in 1920, 10% in 1938 and, with the Beveridge reforms after World War II, to 15.5%.

In 1990 the cost to the capitalist class for this increased state expenditure was 15.5% of national income and it is now, in 2006, 40%. But it is likely to increase further with the growing proportion of the population living longer. This explains the pressure on governments to delay workers' retirement age to 67 and perhaps 70 years old.

Because of the disappearance of the British Empire, what used to be a considerable item of cost borne by the government, defence, has declined as a proportion of national income. In 1900 defence cost was more than double the cost of social services. By 1910 the cost of social services had already exceeded defence, and in 1990 it is more than three times as much. In 1988, for the first time, the Health Service alone cost more than defence.

The additional functions taken on by the government have led to an increase in the number of civil servants, from about 50,000 a hundred years ago to 565,000 in 1990, and 532,900 in 2005 (GUARDIAN, 10 June 2005). However, the present government, since 1996, has hired IT and management consultants, seconded numerous academics from the universities and advisers from the City, and commissioned advertising agencies whose total cost has run into the billions. Government spending on IT consultancy has increased by about 33% in three years, reaching £300 million in 2004-5 compared with £102 million in 2001-2 (NATIONAL OFFICE OF STATISTICS, 2006).

That part of local government expenditure not falling on central government has increased even more than the cost of central government. Hence the experiments with the Poll Tax, capping of local authorities by central government, 'Care' in the community, halting the construction of council houses and off-loading the country's council housing stock onto Housing Associations, the use of Private Finance Initiatives, diverting money for education away from local government straight to schools, introducing market theory into the NHS: reforms all designed to reduce the cost and size of local government.

Effect on the wealth of the super rich

The combined effect of the various higher rates of tax and inheritance duty on higher amounts of income and property has been the very sharp decline in the proportion of accumulated wealth owned by the richest 1% and richest 5% of the population, although in recent years the capitalist class has had a greater success in increasing its portfolio of wealth.

It should be noted that the accumulated wealth of the richest 1% fell under Tory governments, between the Callaghan Labour government and the Blair government of 1997, but has now almost risen to its 1976 level. The Labour Party is just as much the party of the rich as the Tory Party.

	1911 -1913	1924 -1930	1960	1971	1976	1985	1987	2001	2002
By richest 1% of population	70	60	38	31	24	20	18	23	23
By richest 5% of population	85-90	80	64	52	45	40	36	42	43

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In a recent book, RICH BRITAIN: THE RISE AND RISE OF THE NEW SUPER WEALTHY (Politico, 2006), Stewart Lansley showed that the share of wealth owned by the top 1 per cent rose from a historic low in 1989 to 23 per cent in 2002. According to the annual Rich Lists published by the SUNDAY TIMES, the number of billionaires in Britain has more than tripled since 1990, while for those worth over £100m, it has risen more than five fold (DATA MONITOR, 2006)

Resistance

The capitalist class as individuals would like to pay no tax at all, and have a minimal state, as described by Adam Smith in the WEALTH OF NATIONS.

Marx pointed out that the capitalist class are not moral sentimentalists, charities, or concerned about business ethics. As he noted:

Accumulate, accumulate! That is Moses and the prophets!... Accumulation for accumulation's sake, production for production's sake....

Capital Volume 1, chap. XXIV, p.595

The restless never ending process of profit making alone is what he [the capitalist] aims at. This boundless greed after riches, this passionate chase after exchange values, is common to the capitalist and the miser; but while the miser is merely a capitalist gone mad, the capitalist is a rational miser.

Capital Vol. 1, chap. 4, pp. 152-3

Many of those on the top of the rich list have paid taxation consultants to protect their wealth going to the Treasury. In the past three years, Philip Green has paid his family some £2bn in dividends from Bhs and Arcadia. And, because his retail companies have been set up so that they are in effect owned by his wife, a Monaco resident, the Green family have saved close to £500m in tax. And when Mr Green paid his family £1.2bn in October 2005, he financed it by taking out a loan which had the advantage of cutting Arcadia's Corporation Tax, as the interest on the loan could be offset against profits (INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY, 19 March 2006).

But the development of capitalism has required the State to enter into the economy to ensure that the capitalist class has an educated and healthy labour force to exploit and to create the necessary infrastructure in which trading takes place. This costs money as does securing trade routes, spheres of influence and the protection of raw resources like oil. Two World Wars also cost the capitalist class dear.

Although some capitalist political parties favour one group of capitalists as opposed to another group all governments have a duty to the capitalist class as a whole represented as the national interest. Despite differences between capitalist parties, they have to ensure that the capitalist class remains competitive against other capitalists from abroad, and payment for the machinery of government has to come largely from taxation.

The game of evasion and who carries the burden of taxation played by the capitalist class and its state explains in part the imposition of income tax, National Insurance contributions and VAT. Income tax is collected by employers and costs the Inland Revenue 1p for every £1 collected, national insurance contributions are collected and paid to the Treasury by the employers, while Value Added Tax is spread over a range of goods and services.

Other policies are to subsidise some important industries at the expense of others. In July 2001, Saferworld showed that the government subsidised the arms industry by £420m each year. The Office of Fair Trading (March 2006) stated that total government subsidies to British capitalism come to about £6bn a year: this is a source of great conflict within the capitalist class over who receives the subsidy and who has to pay for it.

Increasingly over the last three decades the thrust of government policy has been to try to reduce the amount the capitalist class have to pay for the state. It is a difficult equation which requires a delicate balancing act between the interests of the capitalist class as a whole, and the need for capitalist parties to get votes from a non-socialist working

class to win an election.

Privatisation has been one policy adopted by governments in an attempt to reduce costs. The Thatcher and Major governments began a process of privatisation which the Labour government has continued. The Labour government recently privatised Air Traffic Control (where there were immediate redundancies, and attempts to lower wages and worsen conditions of work), and extended the Private Public Initiative (PPI) - an idea originally conceived by the Tories - again to attack levels of pay and working conditions by moving state employees, like cleaners, IT staff and so on, into the private sector at lower rates of pay and poorer working conditions, and typically without union representation.

Successive governments have also forced through legislation at local government level to cut costs. '*Competitive Council Tendering*' under the Tories and '*Best Value*' under Labour sent huge chunks of government into the private sector, at national and local level. As one chief executive of a local authority put it, the aim of local government is to do "*more with less; more service delivery with fewer workers at less cost*".

Class Struggle

Unlike the classical economists (e.g. Adam Smith and David Ricardo) who believed in the harmony of classes, Marx emphasised the importance of class: class interest, class conflict, class struggle and class revolution. Class was defined in an objective way with respect to the means of production.

In capitalism the wealth and privilege enjoyed by the capitalist class is because they own and control the means of production which is protected by their politicians and state.

In capitalism commodities are produced for exchange and profit. It's not just machinery that is turned into capital in this process. Labour power is purchased by capital, and consumed by it during the act of production.

In fact, the money spent in buying labour power is "*variable capital*" as opposed to raw resources and machines, called by Marx "*constant capital*". Money spent on labour power is called variable capital because it is this part of capital that alone generates increased surplus value, the source of the capitalist's profit. How much surplus value, however, will vary according to how hard and how productively the workers actually work.

In WAGES, PRICE AND PROFIT and in CAPITAL, Marx assumed, for illustrative purposes, the worker's labour power or ability to work is a commodity that is sold to the capitalists at its value. However, the use-value of labour power exceeds its value, and therefore creates surplus value which is realised as profit when the commodities are sold. The working class is therefore exploited. Those who live off the unearned income of rent, interest and profit reflected in Government statistics and the SUNDAY TIMES RICH LIST do so at the expense of the working class.

Marx dealt, theoretically, with the pressures on capitalists to reduce costs -which means having to attack workers' pay and working conditions. He set this out in some very readable chapters in Volume 1 of CAPITAL. (see chapters XI and XIII relating to relative and absolute surplus value).

The generation of surplus value or the exploitation of wage labour can be increased in one of two ways: either by increasing the length of the working day (*absolute surplus value*) or decreasing the value of labour power, i.e., decreasing necessary labour (*relative surplus value*).

Absolute surplus value can be increased by an extension of the working day, but this depends on the relative strengths of the capitalist class and working class. A recent example of the lengthening of the working day was highlighted by the TUC:

Senior managers have overtaken teachers to leap to the top of the 2006 unpaid overtime league... Top managers who do unpaid hours put in on average an extra 12 hours of unpaid work each week - an increase of more than two hours from 2005. If they did all their unpaid overtime at the start of the year managers would not get paid until March 24, and if paid for their extra hours would be £24,000 a year better off.

Teaching professionals have been pushed back to second place, although their unpaid overtime is the same as in last year's league table at 11 hours 36 minutes per week, on average. If they did all their unpaid hours at the start of the year they would not be paid until March 22, and if paid for them would be earning nearly £10,000 extra a year.
TUC UNPAID OVERTIME LEAGUE TABLE, 24 February 2006

Relative surplus value can be increased by decreasing the value of labour power by increased labour productivity.

The extent and intensity of exploitation is in reality about the control and ownership of the means of production. In other words; the pressure by the capitalist class onto the working class can only be removed by the abolition of the wages system.

THE POISON OF NATIONALISM

How many INDEPENDENT readers get past the obituary pages to the Business section? Judging by the content of the letters page very few. The Business section is a free-trade, free market, "*capitalism can do no wrong*" field of propaganda. Trade Unions are written off as dinosaurs, workers are told to "*get real*" and take pay cuts or lose their jobs in the "*wonderful*" world of globalisation and Marx is attacked with boring regularity.

The worst offender is the Monday guest columnist, Stephen King, managing director of economics at HSBC. He loves money and most probably has a large stash which protects him from the cold wind of capitalism which blows over the rest of us. He loves markets, banking and "*globalisation*". Yet he is fearful of "*protectionism*" which he sees as a political blight on the forward march of capitalism. In his column, he recently wrote an article "*Trade suffers a bumpy ride to a level playing field*" (27.03.06) on the connection between politics and nationalism. He claimed there was an "*innate nationalism*" which gets in the way of "*sensible economic judgements*" and concluded by stating that "*all of us*" are nationalist "*to some degree*". Wrong. No one is born a "*nationalist*". A baby has no idea that they happen to be in England, France or India. Nationalism is taught and it is learnt, through parents, family, friends, school and the media.

And it is incorrect to state that "*we all have degrees of nationalism*". Socialists have no nationalist sentiment. We look at capitalism as a transient and historical world system broken up into competing nation states with one capitalist class and its state facing another capitalist class and its state. Socialists see nationalism as a barrier to socialism, dividing the world's working class and tying them to the interests of the national capitalist state. Periodically this means killing or being killed by other workers in war. Nationalism is therefore a body of ideas and beliefs held by the ignorant and the gullible. Waving flags, cheering "*our Nation*" and attacking immigrants, migrants and workers from another country as "*aliens*" helps retain class exploitation rather than ending it. To use a football analogy, for workers to subscribe to nationalism is to kick an own goal against their class interest.

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How The Change To Socialism Will Happen

We have been asked to produce an article dealing with questions about the number of Socialists necessary to establish Socialism. The need is felt to counter the argument that Socialism is impossible since the Party's Principles state:

that Socialism is only possible when the majority understands, agrees and votes for it.

It is asserted by our correspondent:

that means in our context something like 25 million voters, and if you include China, 400 million voters.

The question of what is the "*critical mass*" needed to make Socialism attainable is put alongside the fact that when the Party had:

... slightly less than one thousand [this] was not sufficient, but would 3 thousand have been enough?

We are told these would be:

... three thousand members who understand the case for Socialism and were prepared to join an attainable number, a critical mass much less than 25 million or 500 million.

This is intriguing, if only because the word "*attainable*" implies "*can be, but not as yet attained*". They could hardly join a greater number yet to come into being.

Since the figures are entirely arbitrary, how much less than 25 million in the UK or 500 million in China? Why only the UK and China? Could even five or ten million Socialists develop in the UK, without similar numbers developing in France, Germany, the US and Australia? If China had 100 million Socialists, would Japan and India also not have comparable numbers?

Having recognised the impact that less than a thousand Socialists made by opposing war and publishing pamphlets, the seemingly unrelated question is asked:

And is ten thousand as impossible and distant as 25 million or a lot closer?

It should not be assumed that the growth in the number of Socialists, say from 1,000 to 5,000 or from 5,000 to 10 or 50 thousand will result exclusively from Socialist propaganda. The negativity of reform parties and the increasingly obvious intractability of capitalism's problems will turn people to thinking about changing society - everything else having been tried over and over to no avail. Leaders are increasingly becoming discredited and must inevitably become more so.

The contagion of a sound, untried idea - common ownership - and growing class consciousness will make Socialism the only game in town.

Socialist parties are the organised expression of what is - historically - something the time for which has come. Also, of course, Socialist propaganda will be much more abundant as numbers grow. For clarity of purpose, such parties must retain the historic "*no compromise*" ethos - must work for Socialism and only for Socialism.

It is not easy to put vast numbers of people into neat categories. Why for example, do about half the US electorate not vote and around 40% in the UK? Are these millions of people apathetic, and if so, how did they become apathetic? Are they disillusioned and despairing? What in fact do the millions who vote really think they are voting for?

Certainly, many years ago when we used to canvass door-to-door in working- class areas, the most often repeated response was "*you are all the bloody same once you get into power*".

Most of the people who answered the door had been watching television and went back to it. Television, like the mass-press, the radio and schools plays a major role in the manipulation of ideas.

Are more people becoming less trusting of what is on the "*box*"? Have the brainwashers noted viewers changing attitudes and become more subtle, putting on more documentary style programmes that are supposed to be more "*sophisticated*" while still implying there is nothing fundamentally wrong with capitalism. How can we know?

About three years ago Channel 4 actually put "*Tony Blair on Trial*". The question was his grounds for going into the war in Iraq. In that one-hour programme, oil was never mentioned.

The media never puts *capitalism* on trial. This or that leader may be vilified but the system remains beyond question.

In the domain of ideas despite the complexity of the factors involved, Marx saw the class struggle as decisive. He says:

... man's ideas, views and conceptions in one word, man's consciousness changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence in his social relations and in his social life... What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes in character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.

Breaking the capitalist strangle-hold means that Socialists have to explain how those material conditions of existence have revolutionary implications because they are antagonistic.

It might be argued that in 100 years we Socialists have made little progress. The fact is that the hundreds of millions of workers who must come to want Socialism before it can be established have remained under the sway of the system that degrades and exploits them. Socialists, being few in number, have always done the one thing Socialists can do: they have advocated Socialism.

Another perspective relevant to the necessary hundreds and millions that must understand, vote for and then bring Socialism into being and run it is the fact that, 100 years ago, Japan, Russia, China and India had not even developed capitalism but were locked in their own respective variants of feudalism. Modern industrial capitalism, with wage-labour and commodity production, was more or less confined to Western Europe and the USA.

The historic changes that have swept away feudalism in these vast and populous areas are no less breathtakingly stupendous than the qualifiedly different changes that will sweep away capitalism. China today, in little over half of that 100 years, is dogging America's footsteps and on the verge of becoming the number one capitalist power.

If the history of human society is one of change, then it is absurd to argue that change ends with capitalism. If change is continuous, then the only out-come of the last class-driven system, can be classless society, common ownership - Socialism. This was already true when the Party was formed and its founder-members drafted our DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES (see Clauses 4 and 5).

In considering the numbers question, we must realise that 200,000 Socialists in the UK would be paralleled by similar numbers in Europe, the US, Canada and the rest of the world.

Such numbers of Socialists could not develop in isolation. The conspiracy of silence would be broken; we would be able to make our own "noise" on a substantial scale. Could China, Japan and India possibly remain immune? We already have a Socialist Party in India. The very nature of a world-wide idea coming of age plus modern electronic communication says no!

It is reasonable to assert that the time between many hundreds of thousands of Socialists and the hundreds of millions necessary for World Socialism will be very much less than the time taken to get from our present numbers to 200,000.

Socialism would then be the irresistible issue of the day.

Ten thousand while still untenable in isolation can only be regarded as part of the forward-thrusting process. The one great essential as the Socialist movement (worldwide) goes through its stages of growth, is that the principled position of *no compromise* must be maintained.

Trying to assess the specific trigger of future change is difficult enough outside of generalisations, not least because of the number of imponderables involved. In the UK we still have the remnants of a feudal monarchy and other forces of reaction, such as religion and traditions, exist both here and world-wide. It is impossible to foretell at what stage these will be swept aside and forsaken.

We do know that revolutionary changes of the same order of magnitude have happened in the past. The social forces of production developed in the womb of primitive-tribal communism to the level where a privileged, non-producing minority was possible. This laid the foundation for the growth of slave societies (see Engels's THE ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY).

At the other end of the historic spectrum, capitalism, which predominates throughout the world today, has developed industrial productive forces to the level where an abundant world with free access is possible. Consciousness has yet to catch up with this potential.

Among the valid generalisations with which we are left, is one from THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO by Marx and Engels:

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious independent movement of the immense majority (p26, Whitehead Library edition).

And two statements by Marx (Preface to THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY):

It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness...

...Therefore, mankind always takes up only such problems as it can solve; since looking at the matter more closely we will always find that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation (pp 11, 12 and 13, Kerr Edition).

Speculating about the size of the "*immense majority*" should not distract us from the fact that an irresistible process of change is taking place. The class-ownership of the means of production and the contradictions to which it gives rise will inevitably create the consciousness necessary to end it. Socialist propaganda is just part of the consciousness-creating process.

SOCIAL REFORMS

Socialism cannot be imposed upon the workers from above. It is a system which implies their conscious recognition of its necessity. The workers cannot make the means of life common property without being aware of what they are doing. A programme of reform is, therefore, useless to a Socialist Party, even as a strategic move. The failure of "Labour" Governments, the world over, to make any appreciable difference to the workers' conditions bear eloquent testimony to the soundness of our claim that, so long as capitalism exists, because it is accepted by the workers as a necessity, it will be run in the interests of the capitalist class, and not of their slaves.

Wherever we turn, the plausible tales of the "reformers" concerning the need of "something new" merely serves to hide from the workers the fact that in spite of Trade Union and State action, their exploitation and degradation grow greater rather than less, and must continue to do so with every improvement in machinery, technique and industrial organisation.

The SPGB will not barter its independence for promises of reform. For, no matter whether these promises are made sincerely or not, we know that the immediate need of our class is emancipation, which can only be achieved through the emancipation of Socialism.. The workers' interests are opposed to the interests of all sections of the master-class; whether bankers or industrialists, landlords or commercial magnates, all participate in the fruits of exploitation. All capitalists will unite in the last resort, in defence of the system by which they live. The progress of Socialist knowledge among the workers, producing uneasiness in the minds of the masters, will itself do more to induce the granting of reforms than any alliance would do.

For the party of the working class, one course alone is open, and that involves unceasing hostility to all parties, no matter what their plea, that lend their aid to the administration of the existing social order and thus contribute consciously or otherwise, to its maintenance. Our object is its overthrow.

From Questions of the Day, The SPGB, 1942 edition, p21

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The European Union and World Capitalism

The European Union, whether made up of just six countries or enlarged to 15 or 25 states, remains a union of capitalist national states, each seeking their own advantage in terms of profitable investments and trade. Each country has a wealthy minority of employers, and a majority who spend their lives on the labour market working for

wages or, alternatively, are unemployed. Capitalism has nothing to offer workers whether in '*independent*' countries or in huge conglomerations.

The lofty isolation of the political elite was sharply demonstrated by the French and Dutch referendum votes, about the proposed new EU constitution, going against the ruling establishment and the big-business class they represent. A lesson in limited 'democratic' practice was seen when the European Commission refused to scrap the proposed constitution despite a substantial "*No*" vote. The French Prime Minister Raffarin was forced to resign and the first move by President Jacques Chirac was to appoint the unelected Dominique de Villepin as Prime Minister. The contempt for the majority vote against the constitution shown by the French and German governments, when they failed to gain the result they wanted, rebounded to the detriment of Chirac. That there is a party in France with the audacity to call itself '*Socialist*' should fool no one. Like their Labour Party opposite numbers in the UK, they wanted a '*yes*' vote for continental capitalism.

It is dangerous nonsense to argue, as some workers do, that a strong and unified Europe is necessary to counter the power of American capitalism and to be able to meet the on-coming competition from China and India. It should be remembered that war is only commercial competition carried on by other means. The objectives remain the same: trade, gaining control of resources, and profits. The existence of the EU merely pushes conflicting interests from the national to the continental level.

It will be seen that being in a huge union of states has not changed the way capitalism operates. French workers are concerned about unemployment, and cuts in pensions and welfare payments. German workers are in the same insecure position, while in June this year Italy was officially declared to be in recession, and the fortune of British capitalism showed signs of a downturn. "*British industry is back in technical recession*" (Bank of England spokesman, BBC 1, 9 May 2005). There are some 20 million unemployed in the EU.

British workers' interests are not involved in whether their rulers get a £364m rebate or not, and farming subsidies do not remove the exploitation of farm workers. Far from bringing 25 capitalist countries and workers harmoniously together, the schisms and ganging-up persist as before.

Bureaucracy in Crisis

The power structure of the EU has always been a top-heavy bureaucracy accountable to no one. The more countries that join, the more remote the centralised ruling clique of commissioners becomes. There is an obvious parallel with the former Soviet Union with its commissars where, as the bureaucracy grew, its remoteness and inefficiency, as well as its irrelevance to the lives of the working class, also became greater. Just as everything had to have the stamp of Moscow approval, so with the EU. Brussels dictates policies that by remote control affect the lives of over 300 million people. The fact that boom-and-bust capitalism is driven by profits means there will be winners and losers, with major powers in the EU - like France and Germany - seeking continued dominance.

Whether disintegration, the fate of the former Soviet Union, will befall the EU remains to be seen but the acrimonious meeting in Brussels in mid-June 2005, where they could not even agree on a budget, collapsed in disarray with the out-going President Juncker saying the EU is in "*deep crisis*". But the workers of the 25 countries have interests that are not the same as those of their competing ruling classes.

The European Union is part of the intrigue and rivalry between world power-blocs, with internal intrigues of its own. This became obvious when proposed Turkish membership was discussed again recently. America, with military bases in Turkey, wants Turkey in. Britain's Foreign Secretary Jack Straw supported America against France and Germany, on the grounds of 'security'.

The World Scene in Brief

The world ambitions of competing power blocs are bound to clash. What is a strong European Union able to do about the continuing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan? In both cases, control of oil and gas resources is the big factor as America determinedly backs its interest with military power. In June this year, Britain's Labour government (a member of the EU), which has backed American militarism, announced more British troops were to go to Afghanistan to "*help the US tackle disorder*" (TELETEXT, 13 June 2005) as suicide bombings and armed resistance have increased after nearly four years of 'liberation'.

America also has military bases in Uzbekistan. When Uzbek government forces shot and killed hundreds of unarmed demonstrators, BBC 1 NEWS (16 May 2005) said there is no democracy and no legal opposition party; they also repeated the fact that the Uzbek regime boils people alive. Yet this is a regime which is a US partner in the 'war against terror'. Also in May, the US declared its intention to withdraw 13,500 troops from Germany and South Korea, and its plans to increase its presence in Poland, Romania and Uzbekistan. A spokesman said these moves would "*provide us with the operational ability necessary for future missions*" (TELETEXT, 14 May 2005).

In 1991 the Soviet Union dissolved into 15 nations. In all the post-war years before that, the Russian empire was a power-bloc second only to America, complete with thousands of nuclear weapons and delivery systems by land, sea and air. Far from balancing each other for peace, for nearly 50 years the world lived in fear of these two blocs coming to blows. At a New York conference, critics of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1970 said that the US, France, Britain, China and Russia had failed to comply with their commitment to disarm (BBC CEEFAX, 30 April 2005). On the 60th VE Day Anniversary, as dozens of world leaders, including those of the UK, US, France and Germany, '*honoured*' the 27 million Russians that died in WWII, nobody mentioned the many millions that have died in wars around the world since, or that the major powers have spent most of those sixty years building ever more deadly military capacities.

In the contradictory world of capitalism with its rampant hypocrisy, while the ruling classes congratulate themselves for cancelling \$40 billion of debts owed by desperately poor nations, world arms-spending in 2004 topped £544 billion (more than a trillion dollars). If we take the figure widely acknowledged a year or two ago, that a billion people exist on a dollar a day, \$40 billion squandered on the military is contemptible.

Among the world leaders visiting Moscow for the VE sixtieth anniversary was President Bush. He went straight from there to Georgia which has recently removed itself from Russia's sphere of influence and, with American help, now looks to build relations with the west. With former Soviet provinces such as Lithuania joining the European Union, and NATO or US forces being stationed on former Russian territory, we are left to wonder what those American "*future missions*" might be.

In paying tribute to US war dead in Holland, Mr Bush made one of those ominous statements for which he is famous: "*there's more work to do to make the world free*" (TELETEXT, 8 May 2005). This is in any case an admission that WWII and 40 million dead did not achieve freedom. In the context of the wages system, 'freedom' is illusory.

More World Chaos

In world trade competition, another force to be reckoned with is China. In June 2005, EU Trade Commissioner Mandelson was in Shanghai warning the Chinese that the EU would take measures to curb their textile exports if the two sides failed to settle their trade dispute. It was stated that China's cheap products threatened some 2.5 million jobs in the EU textile industries. In this instance, China agreed to a temporary limit on its textile exports to the EU, but the competition will be moved elsewhere as new markets will need to be found. American textile bosses also want a limit to Chinese imports.

In a changing world, the most important thing to remember is that the changes take place within the confines of capitalism. The change that will replace capitalism with Socialism will be of a fundamentally different nature, and will require the understanding and conscious participation of a majority of the world's workers.

The changing scene within capitalism can mean that one super-power can decline in relation to another up-and-coming one. China has already overtaken Britain as the world's fourth largest economy. As a world-class capitalist power, China has a very favourable trading relationship with the United States. China made an unsuccessful takeover bid for the US oil giant, Unocal, in October 2005. This brought into sharp focus America's reason for its military presence in Uzbekistan, and all the involved intrigues for building gas and oil pipelines across Afghanistan in which Unocal has been involved, for at least ten years.

There was hostile reaction in China when Japan's prime minister paid tribute to the Japanese who died in WWII, and a war of words between the two countries broke out about drilling for gas in a disputed area of the Chinese sea. China still even marks the anniversary of anti-Japanese protests of 1919. War commemorations serve the ruling classes of the world and their political stooges as a continuing means to reaffirm political nationalism and flag-waving among the exploited masses, who in reality have no country.

Such unsavoury delusions will persist for as long as workers in each country are prepared to be cannon-fodder in wartime and wage slaves in '*peace*' and war. The fact that working-class thinking has not transcended nationalist indoctrination is one reason why integration in Europe is bogged down. It is also a major obstacle to Socialism.

The nationalist loyalties that workers are taught to adopt play no part in the activities of the capitalists. Among the many examples of profits being the sole motivation for capitalists are the facts that British American Tobacco is to move its cigarette production to factories in Singapore and Korea; that the German Volkswagen firm is to set up a facility in India (VW already operates in China), while five million unemployed in Germany stir no European sentiment at VW; and that France is to build a supersonic airliner to replace Concorde in co-operation with Japan, the British EU partners being out of favour.

A final example of power-blocs making no difference to squabbles between ruling classes over frontiers and territory is the enmity that has long existed between Pakistan and India. As elsewhere in the world, religion is used by the rival ruling classes to set Muslims and Hindus (in this case) at each other's throats.

Pakistan is an Islamic military dictatorship with a population of 145,000,000 (2004 figure) and an arsenal of nuclear weapons. Neighbouring India is also a nuclear power. These two Asian giants began the new millennium threatening war on each other over the disputed territory of Kashmir.

Although there have since been peace talks and a lull in confrontation, both continue to produce and test long-range nuclear-capable missiles. There has been periodic fighting between the two states ever since the sub-continent was partitioned after independence in 1947.

In fact, there were periodic reports of shootings between the two sides in Kashmir to within weeks of the devastating earthquake that killed an estimated 30,000 people in the Pakistan sector. The scale of the disaster was such that humanity asserted itself, and the Indian sector was among those sending aid. The norms of capitalism were interrupted by natural disaster.

Workers' Interest - Socialism

The fact that the capitalist class, in countries both large and small, owns the productive resources, means that the working class spends its working life being exploited to produce wealth which enriches the idle owners in the forms of rent, interest and profits while they, the producers, subsist on wages.

Wages are sufficient to keep employees working fit and to provide replacements when they are finished. Wages also guarantee the daily reappearance of workers year in and year out, at offices, banks, farms, mines, factories and transport systems, to continue being fleeced. The European Union has had no effect upon these facts of capitalism.

Nothing but Socialism can crystallise the unity of workers' interests worldwide. Workers must get to understand the world they live in, and how to change it. A world without frontiers or national states depends for its establishment on

a conscious working class. Commonly owned means of production is the only basis on which human needs can become the sole purpose of productive activity.

FACTS ABOUT CHINESE CAPITALISM

200 million people in China live on less than \$1 a day.

THE INDYPEDIA, 2006, p. 47

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Stalin's 'Cult of The Individual'

It is now half a century since the 20th Congress of the CPSU (Feb 1956) when Khrushchev delivered his famous 'secret speech', at a closed session. In this, he denounced Stalin's 'cult of the individual', to the horror of many in his audience. To be safe, he then leaked this text - or a version of it - to a Western journalist who was about to leave Russia the next day for a holiday.

It was not just his Russian audience who were taken by surprise and thoroughly confused. The same applied to the Western 'Communist' parties. This was clear both from the divisions in these parties, the resignations of members, and indeed from the publication, months later, of the *Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, ON OVERCOMING THE CULT OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES* (30 June 1956). As the Central Committee's *Resolution* put it:

It would be incorrect ... to shut one's eyes to the fact that some of our friends abroad are still not quite clear on the cult of the individual and its consequences and are sometimes giving incorrect interpretations to some of the points connected with the cult of the individual (p7).

Unlike the blunt words of Khrushchev, this document was evasive and mealy-mouthed. Khrushchev attacked Stalin for his attacks on Party cadres, in short, for his repressive reign of terror, although significantly *not* for his ruthless attacks on peasants and workers.

The Central Committee, however, evaded the key questions. True, they made references to "*the negative consequences of the cult of the individual*" (p17), and "*gross violations of socialist law and mass repressions*" - which they blamed on Beria and his "*criminal gang*" (p16). But just what these unspecified "*negative consequences*" and "*grave violations... and mass repressions*" actually meant was not spelt out in this document. Much was hinted at but very little was actually admitted. No serious attempt was made to explain how and why this 'cult of the individual' had been able to come into being and persist. And the document also made it clear that the Central Committee's real concern was simply to ensure the continuance of Party rule.

The purpose behind the publication in the West of this *Central Committee Resolution* (by Soviet News and similar Moscow-backed propaganda organisations) was clearly to stem the 'revisionist' tendencies in Western Communist parties, especially those like the Italian CP leader, Togliatti, who argued that Soviet society had possibly arrived at "*certain forms of degeneration*" (quoted on p25).

However, the Moscow Central Committee took comfort in the support they received from the French and American Communist parties, and especially that from the Chinese CP: "*... some grave errors committed by Stalin... and their consequences. The graveness of these consequences raised... the necessity... [of] calling upon the entire party to take care to prevent a repetition of this...*" (p24). Ironical given, that even today, post-Mao, China still operates prison camps and ruthlessly suppresses all forms of opposition.

As for modern Russia, whilst lip-service is paid to Western ideas on multi-party '*democracy*' and the freedom of the press and other media, Putin's political regime is at best authoritarian, at worst repressive. Freedom is, to start with, the freedom to think differently. It means, among other things, being able to tell it how it is; and to recognise, as Marx did, that where wage-labour exists, so too does capital, and vice versa. Russia was *never* Socialist. Unfortunately the Left had become, and still remains, addicted to lies. As a former Communist, Arthur Koestler,

noted:

The addiction to the Soviet myth is as tenacious and difficult to cure as any other addiction. After the lost Week.end in Utopia the temptation is strong to have just one last drop, even if watered down and sold under a different label. And there is always a supply of new labels on the Cominform's black market in ideals. They deal in slogans as bootleggers deal in faked spirits; and the more innocent the customer, the more easily he becomes a victim of the ideological hooch sold under the trademark of Peace, Democracy, Progress, or what have you.
[from THE GOD THAT FAILED, ed. R.H.S. Crossman, p. 82]

About the same time, the Yugoslav Milovan Djilas was trying to come to grips with the class system of 'communist' Russia and its satellites in Eastern Europe. To him, it was indistinguishable from any other bureaucracy since, mistakenly, he believed there was no right of inheritance: "*In this new class no one inherits anything except the aspiration to raise himself to a higher rung of the ladder*" (THE NEW CLASS, chap III, 1967 edition, p66). However, in the Soviet Union's 1939 Constitution, Stalin specifically allowed for the right of inheritance. Along with the absence of taxes on inherited wealth, this meant the accumulation over time of vast wealth in the hands of a minority. Even by Djilas' criterion, this meant the growth of an exploiting class, living on the surplus value created by a vast army of wage-slaves.

This '*new class*' was, in fact, a part of the world capitalist class, and has since taken its place on the world stage as part of that class whose global exploitation of the world working class was described by Marx and Engels in THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO. The belief that state capitalism was simply a form of Socialism, a step on the road to Communism, was one which The SPGB has spent a lot of time refuting, from the very earliest days of Lenin's regime. But Leninism's lies still cast a dark shadow, misleading the blinkered Left even today.

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Tolpuddle and the Effectiveness of Trade Unions

Tolpuddle 2006 might be a good place to begin to ask the question about the effectiveness of trade unions. The effectiveness of trade union action has clearly been blunted by support for the Labour Party. But the experience of all Labour Governments, particularly the present one, has shown that, far from using political power to force employers to grant wages increases, governments have used political power against workers either to impose wage constraint or to reduce wages.

Nor has the present Labour government repealed the raft of anti-trade union legislation passed by the previous Tory administration. And the Labour government has used troops to break strikes as in the recent Fire-fighter strike. Trade union effectiveness has also been blunted by the extent to which the unions have been drawn into the administration of capitalism notably the recent use of "*partnerships*". The relationship between Trade Unions and the Labour Party distracts attention from the principle purpose of trade unions: to resist the pressure of the capitalist class on the workers' pay and conditions. What, then, is to be the future of Trade Unions? At present they appear to be used by "*Leaders*" as a fast-track to become Labour Politicians, and to that extent less useful to the workers.

However, there is no obvious reason why, with the spread of an understanding of capitalism among the members, they should not be valuable centres of resistance to attack by the capitalist class. The Trade Unions arose from the resistance to the pressure on the workers in the early days of capitalism. Trade Unions took the form they did as events dictated and have had to adapt to changing circumstances, sometimes acting better than at other times. Trade unions have tended to overemphasise the distinction between workers of different occupations skills and gender, have taken a hostile view to immigrant workers, to workers in other countries and even between one union and another.

The SPGB, organised as it is for the emancipation of the workers as a class, insists upon the necessity for subordinating all distinctions to class solidarity. Politically, workers throughout the world, no matter where they live and work, have one interest, and that involves winning political power to replace capitalism with Socialism. Socialists recommend that trade unions should do their utmost to resist the intensity and extent of class exploitation.

However, Socialists point out to Trade Unions, that they can only deal with the effects of capitalism. To end the social problems which face the working class today does not just involve breaking with the pro-business Labour Party - although it is a step in the right direction - but to make a revolutionary break with the profit system through the abolition of the wages system and the establishment of Socialism.

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Desperate Spoiling Tactics

The Clapham-based Socialist Party has a three-tiered structure. At the top are the godfathers who run the party, make the decisions and plot the strategy. The second tier are the students who usually last until they graduate or find a safe academic job. Then there is the lower tier - those who have buried their heads in the sand for the best part of 20 years, thinking that the political struggle in the old The SPGB and the split into two separate organisations was just a bad dream.

In the last 15 years, the reconstituted The SPGB has survived against all the odds. We now have over 5000 visitors to our web site each month. We run lectures, and publish this quarterly journal, The SPGB, as well as a number of pamphlets and leaflets. We have survived, putting the Socialist case as it was put in 1904, principled and with a socialist object.

Not so the Clapham Party. We were just going to let them degrade but a recent spoiling tactic calls for comment.

When someone types in "The SPGB" on an Internet search engine up comes The SPGB in first place, followed by an entry for one of our popular pamphlets, WAR AND CAPITALISM.

Yet, in fifth position, is a strange entry:

"The SPGB Journal The SPGB Analysis Historical Materialism Marx Marxism Economics"
(www.socialiststudies.org.uk)

Must be The SPGB again. No, surprise, surprise: the unsuspecting surfer latching onto this is sped on to the website of the World Socialist Movement, aka the Socialist Party at Clapham. And that, of course, is *not* the organisation responsible for publishing The SPGB.

We have seen sight of no conference or delegate instruction agreeing to this somewhat desperate, underhand tactic. Those with their heads buried in the sand would not know or care, and the students aren't clever enough, so we presume it is the godfathers at the top, their de facto leadership group, showing us what Stalinist / Trotskyist politics means in practice in the 21st century.

The SPGB has always opposed the politics of the Left. Adherence to principle and open democratic practice distinguish The SPGB today, as in the past, from those who are prepared to use any deceptive means to further a non-socialist end.

(Postscript: Apparently Clapham's new "webmaster" is going to remove the offending site - we shall wait and see if he is allowed to.)

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The Dark Art of Black Propaganda

Introduction

The Tory Party has a long history of practicing the dark art of black propaganda although they are not alone in this respect. A recent example in the form of an article "*Fascism has always had a socialist edge, which is why it now threatens New Labour*" (THE INDEPENDENT (21.04.06), written by Dominic Lawson. Another article of a similar nature was published in the TIMES (25.04.08) by the Tory, Oliver Kamm against the reformist and anti-working class organisation calling itself Respect.

Mr Lawson tries to demonstrate that fascism derives from what he misleadingly describes as "*Socialism*". He looks at the BNP's Manifesto and concludes that many of its policies are "*old Labour*" therefore the BNP policies are "*socialist*". But he fails to make a sound and valid case for his argument.

Old Labour was never Socialist; it never stood for the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production by all of society. Labour, old and new, was and is a Party of capitalism, pursuing policies in the interest of the capitalist class, from pay restraints, the use of troops in breaking strikes, the pursuit of national interest through war, to "*being at ease with the rich*". As Parties of Capitalism there is just as much similarity between the BNP and the Conservative party as there is to the BNP and the Labour Party, old and new. They all support the wages system, class exploitation and the interest of the capitalist class.

Lawson picks one policy out as "*an example*", the assertion that the BNP will take railways back into public ownership as a single company. Hardly a Socialist policy. Some capitalists and their supporters today particularly THE INDEPENDENT's Whittam Smith, wants the railways renationalised in the interest of the capitalist class as a whole. And it was a Tory government in 1844, which passed the Act giving them power to take over the railways, intending to use it as a threat to deter the companies from exploiting their transport monopoly. Among later nationalisations supported by Tory governments were the Telegraphs, the Telephones, Cross-channel cables, the BBC, London Passenger Transport, Central Electricity Board and British Overseas Airways Corporation.

Mr Lawson also chides Lord Callaghan, who when Home Secretary, "*rushed through the legislation which prevented British Passport holders from coming to this country if they did not have a British Parent or Grandparent*". He forgets to remind his readers that the Labour Government legislation was built off earlier Tory Party legislation in 1962 and again in 1964.

Of racists and authoritarianism Mr Lawson should look to his own Party. Has Mr Lawson forgotten whose Party Mr Enoch Powell was a member of for most of his political life? Which Party was Powell in when he delivered his infamous "*Rivers of Blood*" speech? Powell was a member of the Tory Party. Racism, bigotry and hatred have all been at home with the Conservatives, as they equally have been with the Labour Party.

And let us not forget Mussolini's dictum "*Everything in the State, nothing outside the State, nothing against the State*". Such a political view is at complete odds with the one advocated by socialists, that socialism will have no State but will be a free association of men and women with the administration of things not people. Fascism just highlights what the State can only ever be; an institution of class oppression and class privilege.

Capitalism Causes Unemployment, Racist Conflict and Fascism

It is instructive to reflect on the Great depression of 1875 to 1895. It was at this time that the word "*unemployment*" first came into prominent use. This period also saw the rise of political racism, particularly in the East End of London where unemployment was severe.

In the mid-1880's there was openly racist conflict in the East End in the misguided belief that workers were threatened by immigrant labour. These fears were politically exploited by local Tory MP's. In 1892 in a piece of electoral opportunism, the Tories agreed to an Aliens Bill. Racist organisations appeared on the scene, like the British Brothers League, which had its first packed-out meeting in Stepney in May 1901. A Royal commission was appointed in 1903 with the passing of the Aliens Bill in 1905.

It was a Tory government who passed the Aliens Act, a forerunner to Labour's racist *Asylum Seekers Act*, and

deported 1,378 Jews.

The darkness of Lawson's specious propaganda centres on Benito Mussolini. Lawson claims he *"sprang from the Italian Socialist Movement, but broke ranks over the participation in the Great War, when he formed the Fasci d'Azione Rivoluzionaria"*

Lawson states that Mussolini's policy was *"a public works programme"* similar to the *"National Socialism"* of Hitler and that Oswald Mosley left the Labour Party with six others to set up the New Party which was then to become the British Union of Fascists, because Labour *"refused to defeat mass unemployment with a gigantic programme of public investment"*. Lawson forgets to tell his readers that Mosley began his political career as a Conservative.

To begin with, the *"gigantic programme of public investment"* cannot end unemployment. When a government collects a portion of surplus value as taxation it denies the capitalist class money it would have either spent on reinvestment or on their own personal life styles. Taxation is not additional investment. And it might give the illusion of reducing unemployment but these schemes can never create the necessary conditions for the trade depression to move from economic stagnation to a modest degree of activity. The failure of Keynesianism in the 1970's demonstrates this only too well.

The reform programme of the so-called Italian Socialist Party from which Mussolini sprang was not Socialist and had no Socialist object. The "Socialism" of the NSDAP had nothing in common with the Socialism of Marx. The programmes of both parties were littered through with reforms and policies which would have meant a similar form of State capitalism.

And it was clear to where Hitler's political programme was weighted. In an attempt to obtain financial contributions from industrialists, Hitler wrote a pamphlet in 1927 entitled THE ROAD TO RESURGENCE. Only a small number of these pamphlets were printed and they were only meant for the eyes of the top capitalists in Germany. The reason that the pamphlet was kept secret was that it contained information that would have upset Hitler's working-class supporters. In the pamphlet Hitler implied that the reform measures included in the original twenty-five points of the NSDAP programme would not be implemented if he gained power (Spartacus.school.com2006)

And what were the Nazi economic policies of 1933 after Hitler assumed power?

- On 2nd May, 1933, Adolf Hitler ordered the Sturm Abteilung (SA) to arrest Germany's leading trade unionists. Robert Ley formed the Labour Front (DAF), the only union organization allowed in the Third Reich.
- A pay freeze was introduced in 1933 and this was enforced by the Labour Front. Wages were now decided by the Labour Front and compulsory deductions made for income tax, and for its Strength through Joy programme. The Labour Front issued work-books that recorded the worker's employment record and no one could be employed without one.
- The government banned the introduction of some labour-saving machinery.
- Employers had to get government permission before reducing their labour force.
- The German government gave work contracts to those companies that relied on manual labour rather than machines. This was especially true of the Government's massive autobahn (motorway) programme.
- The German Government concentrated on rearming. Thousands of workers worked in factories producing weapons.
- Forced conscription into the German armed forces helped to artificially reduce the numbers of unemployed.
- Hitler also encouraged the mass production of radios. In this case he was not only concerned with reducing unemployment, but saw them as a means of supplying a steady stream of State propaganda to the working class in Germany.

· Youth unemployment was dealt with by the forming of the Voluntary Labour Service (VLS) and the Voluntary Youth Service (VYS), these planted forests, repaired river banks and helped reclaim wasteland.

· Women in certain professions such as doctors and civil servants were dismissed, while other married women were paid a lump sum of 1000 marks to stay at home.

· In the summer of 1935 Adolf Hitler announced the introduction of Labour Service (RAD). Under this measure all men aged between the ages of nineteen and twenty-five had to work for the government for six months. Later women were also included in the scheme and they did work such as teaching and domestic service.

The political representatives of the British capitalist class had no difficulty in praising Hitler.

"Herr Chancellor, on behalf of the British Government I congratulate you on crushing communism in Germany and standing as a bulwark against Russia"

- Lord Halifax, then British Deputy Prime Minister (later Foreign Secretary) addressing Adolf Hitler, November 1937.

LABOUR AND TRADE UNION REVIEW No. 84

The first avowedly fascist organisation in Britain was the '*British Fascisti*' (later called the '*British Fascists*') formed in 1923. Largely comprised of military officers it was little more than "bouncers" for the Conservative Party, stewarding Conservative meetings and calling for votes for the Conservative Party. One of their few policies was, as a means of reducing unemployment, a demand for a reduction in income tax so that rich people could hire more servants. During the General Strike of 1926 they served as scabs.

However in the 1920s, Britain admiration for Fascism mostly meant admiration for the Italian Government rather than agitating for Fascism in Britain.

As Sir Winston Churchill put it:

If I had been an Italian, I am sure that I should have been wholeheartedly with you [Mussolini] from start to finish in your triumphant struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism.

But in England we have not had to fight this danger in the same deadly form. We have our way of doing things.

[FELLOW TRAVELLERS OF THE RIGHT by Richard Griffiths pp. 14 and 15]

According to the historian A.J.P. Taylor:

Every politician extolled the virtues of democracy, especially at the expense of Soviet Russia. Despite this rhetoric, MacDonald wrote friendly personal letters to the Fascist dictator Mussolini; Austen Chamberlain exchanged photographs with him and joined him in family holidays; Churchill sang his praises in newspaper articles (ibid., page 14).

It was in the 1930's that British Fascism had its first and so far only flowering in the form of Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists formed on the first of October 1932. Mosley who had moved from the Tory Party to the Labour left to Fascism, formed the '*January Club*'.

Members of the January Club included Wing-Commander Sir Louis Greig, Lord Erskine a Conservative-Unionist M.P. and assistant Government whip, Lord William Scott brother of the 8th Duke of Buccleuch and Conservative-Unionist M.P., Lord William Scott who was Secretary of State for War from 1900 to 1903 and Secretary of State for India from 1903 to 1905 and Lord and Lady Russell of Liverpool.

When Fascism was discussed in Parliament, the following Tory views were offered. William P.C. Greene, Conservative Party M.P. for Worcester and a landowner in Australia, asked:

Is it not a fact that ninety per cent of those accused of attacking Fascists rejoice in fine old British names such as Ziff, Kernstein and Minsky? (ibid., page 88).

F.A. Macquisten Conservative M.P. with business interests in Rhodesia replied:

Were some of them called Feigenbaum, Goldstein and Rigotsky and other good old Highland names? (ibid., page 88)

Nor was this the only display of parliamentary anti-Semitism at the time. Following Hitler's rise to power, Edward Doran - Conservative-Unionist M.P. for Tottenham North - had this to say:
In view of the present situation in Germany would the Home Secretary take steps to prevent any alien Jews entering this country from Germany? (ibid., p.81)

On the 14th of June 1934, during the parliamentary debate following the anti-fascist disruption of the B.U.F. rally at the Olympia, Michael Beaumont - Conservative M.P. for Aylesbury - who described himself as "*an avowed anti-democrat*" said of the B.U.F. that there were a lot of "*respectable, reasonable and intelligent people*" [in it] (ibid., p. 54).

H.K. Hayles - Conservative M.P. for Hanley - said that the B.U.F. contained: "*some of the most cultured members of our society*" (ibid., p. 54).

Admiration for Germany's totalitarian dictatorship continued throughout the 1930's. Lord Londonderry, Secretary of State for Air from 1931 to 1935, became from early 1936 onwards an outspoken supporter of the Hitler regime.

Oliver Kamm, while tracing the same ground as Lawson, added another piece of nonsense which he only repeats from the book "PLANNED CHAOS" by the Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises published in 1947. Mises unsuccessfully tried to show a link between the ideas of Marx and the state capitalism found in Russia and Germany during the 1930s and 40s.

Kamm wants to establish a link between Marx, Marxists and Fascists and believes he has found such a link in the case of Henri de Man. Kamm writes: "*The Belgium Marxist Henri de Man exercised a powerful influence on Mussolini*". It is a wholly bogus assertion.

De Man was no Marxist. He repudiated the class struggle and the centrality of the working class establishing Socialism without the need for leaders like himself. When Henri De Man's Italian translation of *Au-dela du marxisme* emerged, Mussolini was excited and wrote to the author that his criticism destroyed any "*scientific*" element left in Marxism.

Mussolini was appreciative of de Man's other idea that a corporate organisation and "*new relationship between capital and labour*" would eliminate "the clash of economic interests" and thereby neutralise "*the germ of class warfare*" (POLITICS DEFINED, com/fascism2006).

What marks The SPGB out from all the parties of capitalism is that we reject the dark art of black propaganda. We do not attack the person instead of the political ideas the person holds, we do not misrepresent, lie, defame, use spoiling tactics, use violence, smear our opponents, use fallacious propaganda, break up our opponents meetings, appeal to the mob, set ourselves up as leaders; in short use any means to obtain our socialist objective. The democratic end necessitates the democratic means. The SPGB have always insisted that the best propaganda is the truth.

WAGES PRICE AND PROFIT

At the same time, and quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerrilla fights incessantly springing up from the never ceasing encroachment of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the material conditions and the social forms necessary for an economical reconstruction of society.

Instead of the Conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!" they [the workers] ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary word, "Abolition of the wages system".

Q and A: Immigration

QUESTION

Immigration through the UK government is & has been used as a lever causing greater power of the capitalists to divide the working class by making us all live in a low-wage economy WHICH WE ARE IN NOW so what's the sense in saying 'no immigration controls'. Immigration control should be in the hands of the working class, perhaps as a current demand that it be in the hands of the Trade Union Congress. Otherwise we socialists like lemmings are letting the BNP in!

Michael West (e-mail)

REPLY

Let us first set the question of immigration in the context of a class divided society. Capitalism is a world-wide system in which the earth's resources are owned by a minority capitalist class to the exclusion of everyone else. The working class majority do not own the means of production and are forced to sell their ability to work for a wage or salary. The working class produce more social wealth than they receive in wages and the surplus is divided up by the capitalist class in the form of rent, interest and profit. The problems which face the working class derive from private ownership of the means of production, the existence of the wages system and class exploitation.

The wages system is a form of rationing which means that workers do not get adequate education, health care and housing. Workers also face periodic unemployment and a descent into social alienation and crime. They are forced to compete on the labour market, with many workers in the world subsisting on \$2 a day.

We ask Mr West, suppose all the immigrants were expelled from Britain and there were no asylum seekers would the social problems facing the working class improve? They would not. The wages system and class exploitation would still generate unmet social needs and problems like unemployment. These problems would remain no matter what government was in power whether; Labour, Tory, Green, Respect or BNP.

So the question of immigration control is of no interest to the working class. There should be class solidarity within the trade union movement. However, trade unions are always dealing with the effects of capitalism as it faces the working class. Capitalism is always trying to increase the intensity and extent of class exploitation. Capitalist governments also try to reduce wages through incomes policy and wage restraint. This means trying to drive wages down, displacing workers through the introduction of machinery, making fewer workers work harder for less pay, moving operations to where there is cheaper labour and so on. The class struggle has to be a political struggle for the abolition of capitalism.

If you are a socialist, as you claim to be, then you should understand that a Socialist Party does not immerse itself in the problems facing the capitalist class and its government. The SPGB exists solely to work for the establishment of Socialism and only Socialism.

We reject your assertion that the pursuit of our Socialist objective will let in the BNP. If the BNP were elected into power it would have been the result of non-socialist workers voting at elections against their own interests. Democracy under capitalism can be a double-edged sword; used for freedom or to cut your own throat. What we do say to the working class is that a vote for any capitalist political Party, including the so-called Left, like Respect, is not in their interest. All parties are expressions of class interests and as a result The SPGB is hostile in Britain to every other political Party.

And we have been here before. The SPGB was formed in 1904 in a period of hostility against immigrants when the Party wrote in its FOURTH PRINCIPLE that "*the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation*

of all mankind without distinction of race or sex" - a revolutionary piece of writing at the time. The Party was around in the 1930's when we argued that mass unemployment was the result of capitalism not the existence of Jews and again in the 1970's we showed that capitalism was to blame for the social problems facing the working class not the arrival of "*Ugandan Asians*" and "*Afro-Caribbeans*".

Every time racism has come to the fore The SPGB has stated that the problem facing the working class was not other workers but capitalism. We were largely ignored. However, the Left's reforms (for example, The Labour Party's *Race Relations Act* and the SWP's *Rock Against Racism*) did not work, as they could never work in a class divided society, and the problem of racism has persisted from one generation of workers to the next. If the working class had turned their attention to becoming Socialists and consciously and politically confronted the capitalist cause of their problems rather than voting for capitalist politicians and their empty promise of reforms the BNP would now not exist. The establishment of Socialism would have meant that workers would not be in "*a low-wage economy*" because the wages system would have been abolished. Production would be taking place to meet human need rather than profit. We are not "*lemmings*" but political realists. Until the working class abolishes capitalism social problems like racism will remain.

The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got."

"The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win."

Marx and Engels, THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

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Object and Declaration of Principles

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN HOLDS:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (ie land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the

monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

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